



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE OPERATOR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

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ARIZONA OPERATOR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. *What must I do to become a certified operator?*

An applicant must comply with the education and experience requirements for the certification classification and grade for which application is made and achieve a passing score of a 70% or greater on the certification examination.

2. *Can I still become a certified operator if I didn't finish high school?*

An applicant must have graduated high school or the equivalent pursuant to R18-5-112.D(1) of the Arizona Administrative Code (A.A.C.).

3. *I passed a GED test. Does this satisfy the high school requirement?*

The rule refers to “high school graduation or the equivalent”. High school equivalency is accepted as being equal to a high school diploma.

4. *If I have a bachelor's degree in a technical discipline, do I still have to pass an examination and meet the experience requirements?*

Each applicant must pass an examination and meet minimum experience requirements to become a certified operator. However, an applicant may be eligible to take a higher grade examination depending on the amount of post secondary education that an applicant has completed. ADEQ will review the education and experience to determine if you are qualified to take an examination at a higher grade level.

5. *Do I have to attend a class to become a certified operator?*

You do not have to attend a mandatory class to become a certified operator. However, a class or refresher course may be very helpful.

6. *How do I apply for an examination?*

ADEQ Operator Certification Program has a contract with Gateway Community College (GWCC) to proctor Association of Boards of Certification (ABC) exams. Gateway Community College web link is <http://www.gatewaycc.edu/Environment/> . Please contact the contractor directly for exam dates, times, and exam fees. The applicant is responsible for any fees associated with taking an examination.

7. *What are the operator certification fees?*

There are no operator certification fees at this time.

8. *Do I have to notify the Department before taking an examination?*

No. You may directly contact the contractor and complete an application for examination. The contractor and/or ADEQ will determine if you are qualified to take an examination. The Department then issues the certificate by inputting the data into the operator certification database. The actual certificate is printed at the beginning of each month and mailed to the address on the certificate obtained from the application.

9. *What type of examination is required to become a certified operator?*

The Association of Boards of Certification (ABC) standardized exams are used in Arizona. Examinations are 100 questions in length all multiple choice. Use the ABC 2012 Need-To-Know Criteria when preparing.

http://www.abccert.org/testing_services/need_to_know_criteria.asp

10. *What is a PDH?*

PDH means professional development hour.

11. *What is a Professional Development Hour?*

A professional development hour is equal to one contact hour of continuing education. A total of 30 professional development hours are required for each 3-year renewal period **regardless of the number of certificates that are held by an individual operator**. Ten of the thirty PDHs must be directly related to an operator's job.

The legal definition contained in Title 18, Chapter 5, Article 1 of the Arizona Administrative Code defines a professional development hour as follows:

"Professional development hour" means one hour of participation in an organized educational activity related to engineering, biological or chemical sciences, a closely related technical or scientific discipline, or operations management.

12. *How do I renew my certificate?*

To renew a certificate an operator is required to submit a list indicating the date, type of training, and number of PDHs on a PDH Tracking and Renewal form approved by the Department. Submit the form to the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality Operator Certification Program.

Training certificates or other documents should not be attached to the form unless requested by the Department. The Department randomly audits a percentage of renewals and may ask an operator to provide the applicable documentation. Keep all renewal/PDH documentation for five years in case you are asked by the Department for verification.

To obtain a copy of the renewal form go to the ADEQ web site at:
<http://www.azdeq.gov/environ/water/dw/opcert.html>

13. *What type of PDHs are acceptable to the Department for certificate renewal?*

The type of PDH acceptable to the Department for certificate renewal includes, but is not limited to: an approved college course, a course offered by a Certified Environmental Trainer, regulatory and tribal agency training, certain types of in-house training, technical conferences, correspondence courses, and manufacturer product training. An accredited college course is usually recorded in credit hours. In general, 1 college credit hour = 10 PDHs. If an operator has a question about a specific type of training, please contact the Operator Certification Coordinator to discuss before attending the training.

14. *Do I have to take continuing education to maintain my certificate?*

No. In lieu of continuing education, an operator may retake and pass a written examination for the same class and grade or, if eligible, the next higher grade.

15. *Will the Department notify me before my certificate expires?*

No. It is the responsibility of the operator to maintain the requirements associated with certification. This includes notifying the Department of a change of address as well as renewing a certificate on time. If an operator is unsure when a specific certificate expires, the Department will furnish the operator with this information. In addition, the Department has a current database with each **active** operator's information available on the ADEQ website.

<http://www.azdeq.gov/databases/opcertsearch.html>

16. *If my certificate expires, do I have to retake a written examination?*

Within 90 days after a certificate expires, an operator may be reinstated by meeting all renewal requirements. After 90 days, an operator must take a written examination

for the same class and grade to remain a certified operator. An operator may also take an exam for the next higher grade if eligible.

17. *All of my certificates expire on different dates.*

The rule allows an operator to request, in writing, a common expiration date (month and year), up to 3 years, for each certificate renewed. The Department recommends that each operator take advantage of this option for easier record keeping of certificate expiration dates and PDHs earned toward certificate renewal. We are accepting requests through regular mail, e-mail, or fax. Phone requests will not be honored.

18. *How can I communicate effectively with ADEQ staff?*

All operators are required to notify the Department, in writing, of any changes in employment within 10 days. Operators should also notify the Department of any changes in their personal contact information. Whenever an operator corresponds with the Department in any format, please include the following information (if applicable):

- operator ID # and name
- current mailing address
- phone number(s)
- e-mail address

If you have additional questions that were not covered in this document contact:

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